

# A PAMPERED PRESS AND POLITICAL PRINTING.

## SOME SAMPLE JOBS.

The public Press should guide public opinion by honest discussion of public affairs. If the Press be corrupted by the party in power, its guidance is a fraud, and its discussion is but the purchased advocacy of a hireling.

Can a newspaper have a shadow of honesty in its criticisms of the acts of a Government from which it draws, through gross overcharges, the money which sustains it? To be plain—Can you believe the statements, or trust the conclusions, upon political topics, of a newspaper which is allowed, and even encouraged, to rob the country of large sums every year?

There are regular Contractors for the Government Printing, who do the work at fixed prices. Yet the Ministers take work away from their Contractors to give it, at much higher rates, to political favorites.

Take that loud-mouthed advocate of the Ottawa Ministry, the "Hamilton Spectator." In one year, 1884, it received \$17,897.18 for job printing alone from the Government. At honest rates this would give a sufficiently handsome profit to blind the eyes and silence the tongue, but it was pointed out by a practical printer (Mr. Somerville, of Brant,) in the House of Commons, that out of the above sum there was a total excess of \$13,287.04 over the fair and regular price of such work! Can any one believe a statement in that newspaper? Is not everything tainted which comes from such a source?

Next, examine the record of the Montreal "Gazette," the property and organ of the Minister of the Interior. In 1884, it received for printing and advertising, over \$18,000. Of this sum, \$9,211.15 was paid for a Pamphlet on British Columbia, on which there was an overcharge of \$5,895.89 over and above the ordinary business profit! No wonder that newspaper defends every job and corrupt action of the Ministry.

There are small fry in the tory press, who are equally as greedy and unscrupulous as the large newspaper sharks. Take, for an illustration, the case of the Prescott "Messenger," a small sheet published in the County of Leeds and Grenville. The Government decided to publish a German emigration pamphlet, and instead of calling for tenders for the work, or giving it to one of the German printing offices in the country, they gave the work to the Prescott "Messenger," which had not a letter of German type in its office. If there had been a saving of money in this course it would have been justifiable, but, on the contrary, there was enormous loss. The "Messenger" was paid \$6,871.65 for the pamphlet, and two German printing establishments in Waterloo County calculated that they could have done the work for \$1,900, and made a fair profit. In this single transaction, therefore, the Government paid out of the public funds a bribe of \$5,071.65 in excess of the fair cost to this newspaper. Many a farm in that county can be bought for that sum, which was enough to furnish that newspaper office with all its type and material, and a new steam press and engine besides!

This charge was brought on the floor of Parliament by Mr. Somerville, it was not denied, and it cannot be contradicted.

The French Government newspapers in Quebec demanded a share of the spoils, and they got it. The *Courier de St. Hyacinthe* printed the List of Civil Service Employees, in 1884. The Government began by supplying the job office of that paper with the type required at a cost of \$3,931.02. When the work was done the proprietor sent in his bill for \$9,493.98. This was submitted to the Queen's Printer, a Government Official, who reduced it to \$7,688.74. Before passing this account, the Auditor-General, who is independent of the Government, compared it with the contract rate for departmental printing, which was the only rate he could legally allow, and cut it down to \$5,331.40. This threw the responsibility of any overcharge upon the Government, and they were quite equal to the emergency, for they actually passed an Order of the Treasury Board on 15th March, 1884, directing the payment of \$7,688.74 over the head of the Auditor-General, who had certified that this was just \$1,857.34 more than the lawful rate payable by the Government. (See Auditor-General's Report of 1885, page vi.)

Electors of Canada can you trust the Government organs to guard the public Treasury when they share in the plunder? As well might you trust the wolf to guard the flock from danger!